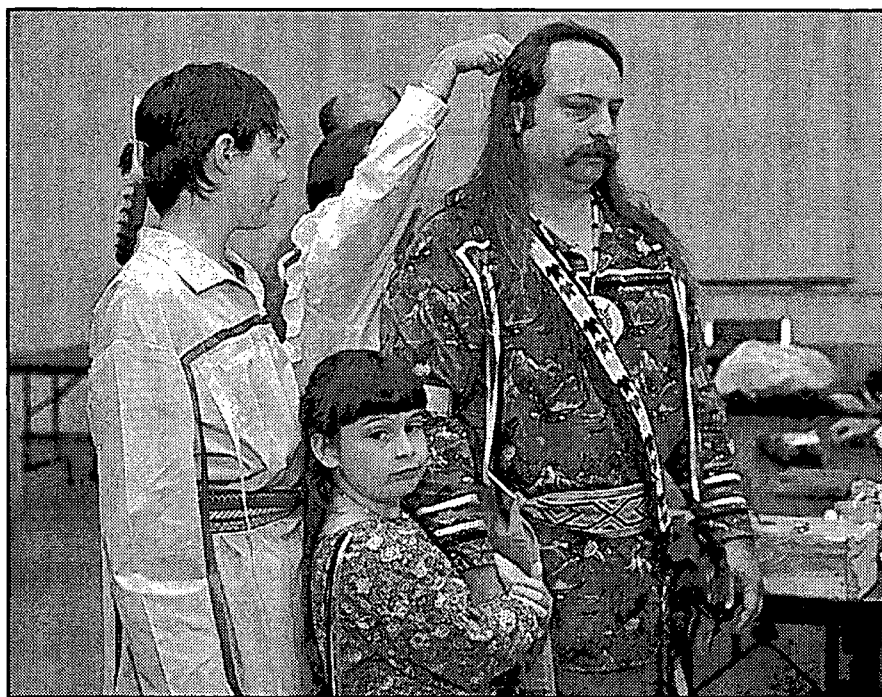




Fact Sheet

**October
1997**

Cultural Resources at the Fernald Site



Shawnee Indian tribal members prepare for a burial ceremony (6481-115).

Introduction

In addition to a number of federal environmental laws, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) must comply with a number of regulations that protect and preserve archaeological and cultural resources that may be affected by remediation activities at the Fernald Environmental Management Project. This fact sheet explains what is being done to comply with these federal regulations.

Impact of Cleanup Activities

From 1951 until 1989, uranium metal was processed at Fernald in support of the nation's Cold War weapons program. After many years of enriched uranium production, a great deal of environmental damage was caused to

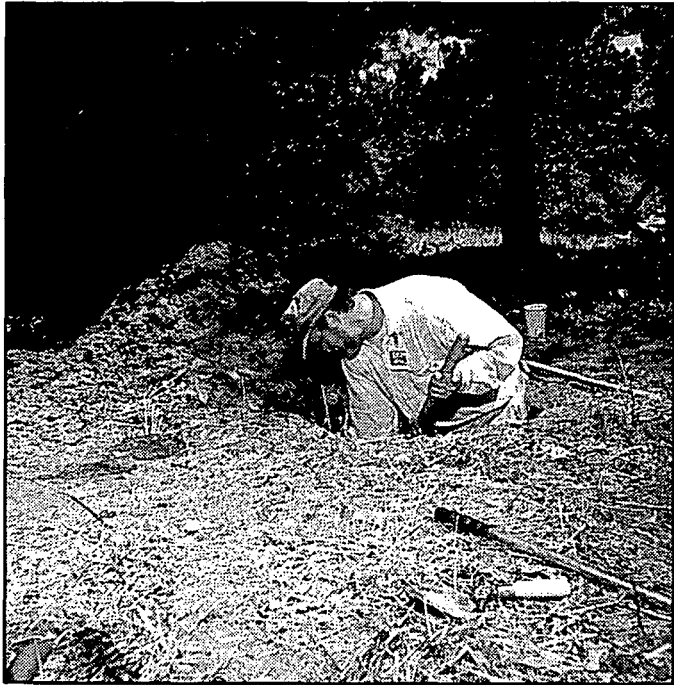
the 1,050-acre Fernald site, as well as to the Great Miami Valley Aquifer which lies beneath the site.

Plans approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Ohio EPA call for buildings and structures within Fernald's former production area to be decontaminated and dismantled.

Additionally, production-generated wastes stored at Fernald must be transported to proper disposal facilities. In preparing the Fernald site for closure, many construction and excavation activities have resulted.

The Fernald site is located in southwest Ohio, an area rich in cultural history. Some of the construction and excavation activities currently underway at the Fernald site have

potential to adversely impact the cultural resources that are buried underground at or near the site. Because of this, numerous archaeological investigations have been conducted at Fernald, and more than 90 prehistoric and historic cultural resource sites have been discovered.



A Fernald worker prepares an individual burial chamber for skeletal remains (6481-86).

Cultural Resource Protection

To protect and preserve cultural resources, the U.S. Congress has enacted several federal laws. The following five acts regulate the management of cultural resources at federal facilities, including:

- the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978,
- the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974,
- the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979,
- the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and
- the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.

In regulating management of these resources, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior has established standards and guidelines for all archaeological activities conducted on federal lands. Along with these standards and guidelines, a series of archaeological investigations must be conducted to evaluate the nature and extent of cultural resource sites and to determine their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

A Phase I Investigation involves a series of "shovel tests," in which soil is shoveled and screened for the presence of artifacts. Soil layers are also examined and the amount of previous disturbance to the soil is determined. If a Phase I Investigation warrants further study, a Phase II Investigation is conducted. The Phase II Investigation is a more detailed examination of soil layers and artifacts that may lie within them.

During a Phase II Investigation eligibility of a site for the National Register of Historic Places is determined.

Finally, if a site cannot be avoided by proposed federal activities, a Phase III Investigation, or data recovery, is conducted. This involves the removal of the artifacts for curation.



Fluor Daniel Fernald Cultural Resources Coordinator Joe Schomaker and Ross Middle School sixth graders prepare a dig site at Governor Bebb Preserve in nearby Morgan Township (6481-51).

Phase III Data Recovery and Curation Underground of Native American Remains at Fernald

In 1994, the Fernald site took possession of five Native American burials, approximately 20 skeletal fragments, and associated funerary objects, while working on a project to provide safe drinking water to residents of Crosby Township, a predominantly rural community located approximately 18 miles northwest of Cincinnati.

During the installation of a pipeline for this Public Water Supply Project, a sixth burial was discovered but left intact, with only the disturbed fragments removed. Since the unanticipated discovery of these burials, DOE-Fernald endeavored to show appropriate respect to Native American cultural traditions, as well as to comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

After three years of consultation with the Native American tribes and groups indigenous to the region, a consensus to reinter burials at the Fernald site was reached. Great care was taken to accommodate the wishes of the Native American tribes and groups which had interests in the area.

Also an integral part of the consultation process was the cooperation of a number of federal, state and local agencies and officials, including DOE, the National Park Service, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, the College of Mount St. Joseph, and many people in the local communities.



"Observing current earth processes helps us understand geological changes that took place millions of years ago," Thea Layne, Fluor Daniel Fernald geologist, (left) tells students at Governor Bebb Preserve (6481-60).

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act requires culturally identifiable Native American graves to be repatriated to the tribe or tribes with which they are affiliated within 90 days of discovery. Because the burials discovered at DOE-Fernald were culturally unidentifiable, in March 1997 the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Review Committee recommended the remains be curated underground. This is believed to be the first curatorial effort of its kind in Ohio. Curation was conducted with guidance from the Native Americans involved in the project. The curation underground took place on federal property at the Fernald site during a private ceremony on May 25, 1997.

Definitions

Reinter—return burials to the ground.

Repatriate—reestablish control over something (i.e., burials) with the proper authorities of a country, government, nation, etc.

For More Information...

For more information, please contact Fluor Daniel Fernald Cultural Resources Coordinator Joe Schomaker, 513-648-3277; DOE-Fernald Public Affairs Director Gary Stegner, 513-648-3153; or DOE-Fernald Cultural Resources Coordinator Ed Skintik, 513-648-3151.

Additional information is also available at the Fernald Public Environmental Information Center, 10995 Hamilton-Cleves Highway, Harrison, Ohio (513-648-7495).